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19. OCCURRENCE OF *BOTIA LOHACHATA* CHAUDHURI IN HIMACHAL PRADESH WITH REMARKS ON THE TAXONOMY OF INDIAN SPECIES OF *BOTIA* GRAY (PISCES: COBITIDAE)

Recently, I came across in the fish collection of this Station 3 specimens of *Botia lohachata* Chaudhuri collected from Nakeri Khud, 10 kms from Dehragopipur, Distt. Kangra (H.P.). These specimens, labelled as *Botia dayi* Hora, agree well with the account of *B. lohachata* as given by Chaudhuri (1912). Since *B. lohachata* is hitherto known from Bihar, Uttar-Pradesh, Rajasthan (Udaipur), Delhi, Punjab and Sind (Menon 1974), the present find extends its distributional range to Himachal Pradesh, as may be expected from the zoogeographical point of view (Menon 1962).

Tilak and Hussain (1977) in their checklist of the fishes of Himachal Pradesh included two species of *Botia*, *B. birdi* Chaudhuri and *B. dayi* Hora, the latter species recorded for the first time from Himachal Pradesh. Hi-

therto, *B. dayi* was known from Eastern Himalayas (Menon 1974) and from the western ghats (Rao and Yazdani. 1978).¹

Day (1878-1889) referred to 6 species of *Botia*, namely, *B. nebulosa* Blyth, *B. dario* (Ham.), *B. geto* (Ham.), *B. almorhae* Gray, *B. bermorei* Blyth, and *B. histrionica* Blyth. As Day's (op. cit.) key to the species of *Botia*, based mainly on the differences in the fin-ray counts and number of barbels, was not helpful Hora (1922) analysed *Botia* spp. on the basis of other characters such as size and position of eyes and length of snout in relation to head. He (op. cit.) dealt with altogether 17 species, 8 of which, namely, *B. almorhae*, *B. birdi*, *B. dario*, *B. geto*, *B. histrionica*, *B. lohachata*, *B. rostrata*, and *B. striata* were considered valid from India. He (op. cit.) synonymised *B. bermorei* (having 6 barbels) with *B. hymenophysa* (Bleeker)—a species (having 8 barbels) known from Burma, Thailand, Indo-Australian Archipelago and re-

¹ See vol. 76 (3): 525-527, for the validity of this record—Eds.

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jected *B. nebulosa* of Day on the ground that it was a species of *Noemacheilus*.

Hora (1932) described *B. dayi* from River Mahanadi, Darjeeling Himalayas and synonymised with it the species described by Day (1878, 1889) under the name *Botia geto*. Menon (1974), in his check-list of fishes of Himalayan and Indo-gangetic plains, recorded 6 species of *Botia*, namely, *almorhae*, *berdmorei*, *dario*, *histrionica*, *lohachata* and *rostrata*. He (op. cit.) ignored the synonymy of *B. berdmorei* with *B. hymenophysa* but omitted *B. birdi*, perhaps inadvertently, and *B. geto* without clarifying their taxonomic status. Thus, only 8 species of *Botia*, namely, *almorhae*, *birdi*, *dario*, *histrionica*, *hymenophysa*, *lohachata*, *rostrata* and *striata* may be provisionally recognised in India.

As Menon (op. cit.), in his check-list, in-

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cludes *Botia berdmorei* from India, and as Hora synonymised it with *B. hymenophysa*, Hora's (1922) key may be modified as follows:

Under Group II. Barbels eight (*Botia* s.s.), after the position B, I, b, i and after the statement "Anterior origin of dorsal almost equidistant from tip of snout and base of caudal", add

Length of head greater than depth of body . .

. *Botia hymenophysa*

Length of head almost same as depth of body

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